THE

Unreasonableness

AND

IMPIETY

OF

POPERY:

IN A

SECOND LETTER

Written upon the Discovery of the Late

PLOT.

Imprimatur *C. Alston, Nov.* 12. 1678.

LONDON,

Printed for *R. Chiswell,* at the Rose and Crown in St. *Paul's Church-yard,* 1678.

The Unreaſonableneſs and Impiety OF POPERY,

In a Second Letter written upon the Diſcovery of the Late PLOT.

SIR,

YOu are pleaſed to tell me that my laſt Letter has had ſome good effect; and that many who were before carried away with the falſe colours of the *Romiſh* Religion, are now a little awakned, and ſeem not unwilling to examin things, which they took formerly upon truſt: and therefore you deſire me, ſince you are not Maſter of ſo much ſpare time your ſelf, to ſet down the moſt material and convincing reaſons, and in as few words as may be, that are moſt likely to open the eyes of honeſt and ſimple perſons, that have been hitherto miſled, and are now willing to be inſtructed.

In all ſuch caſes I firſt conſider the temper of the perſons to be dealt with: Such as take up their Religion out of intereſt or humour, and think it point of honour to continue in it, and ſo will examine nothing are not to be ſpoken to. Others that are naturally ſuperſtitious and credulous, are very hard to be wrought on; for they believe every thing that is ſaid on the one hand, and diſtruſt all that is told them by any body elſe. Some of thoſe have a vanity in coming to talk with Divines, but it is an endleſs labour to deal with them; for at every

time one must begin of new. But the only persons to be dealt with, are those that are sincere and inquisitive, that having been bred in that Religion, or brought over to it by some specious pretences, are now willing to hear reason, and resolved to follow it wherever they find it. And therefore in the first place, their minds must be disingaged from these unjust prejudices, that they conceive of our Religion: and such just prejudices must be offered them against the *Romish* Religion, as may at least beget in them some jealousies concerning it, by which they may be brought so far, as to think the matter suspicious. If then there be such reasons offered them, for suspecting foul dealing from their Priests and Church, as would make them suspect an Attorney, Physician, or any other person with whom they were to deal, they will be prepared to hear reason; which is all that we desire: and upon this Head these following Considerations may be laid before them.

1. All people that pretend to great Power and Dominion over our consciences, are justly to be suspected. If any man designed to make himself Master of any of our other Liberties, we would examine his Title, and suspect all his other motions, when we see they tend to subject us to him: Therefore a Church that designs to keep all her Votaries under an absolute obedience, is justly to be suspected: and our Church that pretends to no such power, is more likely to deal fairly.

2. A Church that designs to keep her Members in ignorance, is more to be suspected, than a Church that brings every thing to a fair Trial. A Church that denies the use of the Scriptures in a known tongue, except to a few, and wraps up their Worship in a Language that is not understood, is reasonably to be suspected, more than a Church that gives the free use of the Scriptures to all

all perſons, and worſhips God in a Language, which the people underſtand.

3. A Church whoſe Opinions tend to engroſs the Riches of the world to its Officers, is more to be ſuſpected, than a Church that pretends to nothing but a competent maintenance of the ſeveral Officers in it. The Redeeming Souls out of Purgatory, and the Enriching the Shrines, or Reliques of Saints, Pardons, Jubilees, and many more Tenets of the Church of *Rome*, are ſo calculated for enriching their Societies; that every cautious man muſt needs ſuſpect ſome deſign in it: which he cannot charge on a Church that has none of theſe Arts to get money.

4. A Church that has carried on its Deſigns, by the moſt diſhoneſt methods poſſible, the forging of Writings, and Deeds, of Miracles, Viſions, Propheſies and other things of that Nature, is more juſtly to be ſuſpected, than a Church that cannot be charged with any ſuch practices. The Forging ſo many Epiſtles for the Popes of the firſt Ages, which are now by themſelves confeſt to be Spurious, with many other Forgeries, were the Engines by which the Papal Power was chiefly advanced. The Legends and Extravagant Fables of which they are now aſhamed, were the chief Motives of Devotion for many Ages. And by theſe, Saints and Images were ſo much magnified, and Monaſteries ſo enriched. A Noted Liar after a Diſcovery is no more to be truſted.

5. Any that conſiders the preſent State of *Rome*, the manner of Electing Popes, the Practices of that Court, and the Maximes they move by, muſt ſee that every thing there is ſecular, corrupt, and at beſt directed by rules of Policy. But to fanſie the Holy Ghoſt can come upon any Election ſo managed, as their own Books ſhew

that

that is, is the moſt unreaſonable thing that can be deviſed. Therefore a Church that neither pretends ſo high, nor can be charged with ſuch proceedings, is more likely to be the true Church.

6. A Church that teaches Cruelty againſt poor Innocent people, that differ in opinion; and ſets on Plots, Conſpiracies, and Rebellion againſt Princes, that are judged Hereticks, is more likely to be corrupted, than a Church that is ſo merciful, as to condemn all capital proceedings for difference of Opinion, and teaches an abſolute Submiſſion to the Soveraign Power, even when it perſecutes and oppreſſes them.

7. A Church that is falſe to her own Principles, is not ſo likely to Inſtruct her members aright, as a Church that is in all things conſiſtent to her ſelf. The great Foundation of their Doctrine, is, That there muſt be a ſpeaking Judg to decide all Controverſies: Now they have no ſuch Judg, for it is not of Faith, that the Pope is this Judg, or is Infallible: And for a general Council, they have had none theſe 112. years, nor are they like to ſee another in haſt. So they have no Speaking Infallible Judg among them. And thus they deceive people by a falſe Pretence: whereas we appeal to nothing, but what we really have among us, which are the Scriptures.

8. A Church that appeals to Marks, which are not poſſible to be ſearcht out, is more likely to miſlead people, than a Church that pretends to nothing but what can be certainly proved. The great thing they appeal to, is the Conſtant Succeſſion of the Biſhops of *Rome*, and their other Paſtors. This cannot be known, no not by a probable conjecture. But there are on the contrary, as great grounds for Hiſtory to deny it in the See of *Rome*, as in any other Ancient See whatſoever: but though

though they have it, both the *Greek* Church, and our Church has it likewiſe.

Theſe are ſuch plain things, and the Truth of them is ſo notoriouſly known, that I ſhould ask any of that Communion, whether upon the like reaſons he would not be Jealous of any perſon or ſort of perſons whatſoever? And if theſe grounds of jealouſie would work in other matters, it is much more reaſonable, that they ſhould take place in matters of Religion; In which as an Error is of far greater Importance; So Impoſtors in all Ages have ſtudied to make gain by Religion. Therefore it is moſt juſt upon theſe violent preſumptions, to look about us, and take care we be not cheated.

But before I would deſcend to particulars, there is one General prejudice that works moſt univerſally, on weaker minds to be removed, which is, that the true Church cannot Erre. If then it be made appear unanſwerably, that the true Church may Erre, and that in a moſt weighty Point, all theſe Arguments fall to the ground.

That the Church of the *Jews*, in our Saviours days was the true Church, cannot be denied; for our Saviour owned it to be ſuch. He joyned with them in their worſhip, He ſent the Lepers to the Prieſt, He commanded them to hear the Doctors that ſate in *Moſes Chair*, and himſelf acknowledged the High Prieſt. This is ſufficient to prove that it was the true Church, and yet this Church erred, in a moſt Important point, whether Jeſus Chriſt was the true Meſſias, in whom the Prophecies were fulfilled or not? they Judged falſly: The High Prieſts with all the *Sanhedrim*, declared him a Blaſphemer, and condemned him guilty of Death. Here the true Church expounds the Scriptures falſly, and erred in the Foundation of Religion.

And

And it is well known, that the chief arguments which they of the Romiſh party bring to prove, that a Church cannot Err, do agree as well to the *Jewiſh*, as the Chriſtian Church: the one being the true Church, under that diſpenſation, as well as the other is now. If then this Deciſion made by the true Church in Chriſts time, did not oblige all in that Church, to go on in that error, but private perſons might have examined their Sentence, and depart from them upon it; then upon the ſame reaſons, though we acknowledge the Church of *Rome* a true Church, yet we may examine her Doctrines, and ſeparate from her errors. This grand prejudice being thus removed, there are two things in the next place to be laid before them.

One is, that the Scriptures, being acknowledged to come from Divine Inſpiration, on all hands, can only decide the Controverſies among us: and the places I ſhall make uſe of, ſhall be cited according to the *Doway* Tranſlation, to which, being made by themſelves, they cannot except.

Another is, that a man muſt judg of things as they appear plainly to his reaſonable Faculties. It is againſt all reaſon to ſay that becauſe it is poſſible for a man to be miſtaken, therefore he ought to doubt his Judgment in things that are clear to him. This muſt turn a man Sceptical both to all Religions, and all the concerns of human life: Therefore every man muſt follow his Judgment, when after a diligent Inquiry, any thing appears plain to him.

And now to come up cloſe to thoſe of that perſwaſion, they are to conſider, that the chief parts of Religion are, *Firſt*, Articles of Faith: *Secondly*, Rules of Life: *Thirdly*, The worſhip of God chiefly in the Sacraments: And *Fourthly*, The Government of the Church. If

then

then in every one of these Heads, the Church of *England* agrees clearly with the Scriptures, and the Church of *Rome* does either manifestly contradict them, or differs materially from them, in all these points, in which we and they differ; then the Resolution of the Question, Whether a man ought to joyn himself to our Church, or theirs? will be easily made.

For Articles of Faith, if either the Apostles Creed or the Creeds of the First 4. General Councils, contain a just abstract of the Faith; then we who receive every Article in these Creeds, do agree more exactly to the Apostolical Doctrine, than they who have added many new Articles to their Creed.

The chief Article of Faith, is, The Covenant made between God and Man through *Jesus Christ*, by which upon the Account of his Merits and Intercession, all who follow the Rules of the Gospel, may expect the Blessings of it, both here, and hereafter. *Pennance toward God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, being the conditions upon which we hope for Eternal life. Acts 20. 21. This we plainly teach, without Addition or Change: But in how many things have they departed from this Simplicity of the Gospel? *First*, In teaching People to address to God, for the Merits and by the Intercession of the Saints: From whom these things are asked, for which the Scriptures direct us only to God and Christ. And in the very words pronounced after absolution, *The Merits of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints*, are joined with the passion of Christ; as the grounds on which we obtain pardon of Sin, Grace, and Eternal life. *Secondly*, In perswading People, That a Simple attrition with the use of the Sacraments, without any real conversion of the Soul or change of life, is sufficient to Salvation. *Thirdly*, In perswading People, That

there is a Communication of the Merits of Saints to other Perſons, though the Scriptures mention only the Communication of Chriſts Merits. *Fourthly*, by Teaching that tho our ſins are pardoned thorough Chriſt; yet, there are terrible and long laſting torments to be endured in another State. *Fiftly*, that ſaying Maſſes, and going of Pilgrimages can Redeem from theſe. Now in all theſe, the two chief Deſigns of the Goſpel are plainly contradicted: Which be; *Firſt*, To Change our hearts and lives: *Secondly*, To perſwade us to a humble Dependance upon Chriſt, and an high acknowledgment of him: But theſe Doctrines of theirs as they ſhew us a way to be ſure of Heaven, without a real Converſion; ſo they take off ſo much from Faith in Chriſt as they carry us to truſt to ſomewhat elſe.

Theſe are Errors of great Importance: Since they corrupt the Fountain, and overthrow the chief deſign of the Chriſtian Religion. They are alſo late devices brought in, in the dark and ignorant Ages.

No mention is made of praying to Saints, in any Ancient Liturgie. There is a great deal againſt it in the moſt Ancient Authors. And though in the Fourth Century, upon the Converſion of many Heathens to the Chriſtian Faith, to humour them in their conceit, of ſome Intermedial Agents, between the Divinity and us Mortals, there was a Reverence for the Saints ſet up, to drive out the worſhip of thoſe Secondary Deities; yet, this was no direct Adoration, though they then began to uſe Rhetorical addreſſes to Saints like prayers: Yet, even in *Gregory* the Great his time (in the beginning of the Seventh Century) we find no Prayers made to them in all his Liturgies. And for the Belief of a ſimple Attrition being ſufficient with the Sacrament, no body ever dreamed of it, before the Schoolmen found

out

out the Diſtinction, between *Attrition* and *Contrition* in the later Ages. For the Communication of the Merits of Saints, the whole Fathers in one voice, ſpeak only of the Merits of Chriſt being Communicated to us. The Fryers firſt invented it, to invite People at leaſt to die in their habits, by perſwading them, that all the merits of the Saints of their Order, were ſhared among the whole Order. And for Redeeming out of Purgatory, the firſt Four Ages knew nothing of it. In the beginning of the Fifth Century St. *Auſtin* plainly ſpeaks of it as an Opinion *which ſome had taken up without any ground, and that it was no way certain, nor could we ever be ſure of it.* And though in *Gregory* the Great's time, the Belief of it was pretty far advanced; yet, the Trade of Redeeming out of it, by ſaying Maſſes for Departed Souls was not even then found out.

So that all theſe are both groſs Errors, and late Inventions.

The next Branch of Religion, is the Rule of human life: which one would think could be taken from no other Standard ſo certainly, as the 10. Commandments: and the Expoſitions given of theſe in Scripture, chiefly our Saviours Sermon on the Mount. Let Malice it ſelf appear, to Declare wherein our Church ſtrikes at any of theſe: or Teaches men to diſobey even the leaſt of them. If then our Rule of life be exactly the ſame; with that which the Scriptures preſcribe, we are ſafe as to this, which may be well called, The moſt important piece of Religion. For it is to be conſidered that God making man *after his own Image*, the end of his Creation was, that he might be made like God. The Attributes of God to be Imitated, are Goodneſs, Mercy, Juſtice, Wiſdom and Truth. And it is certain that the Deſign of

Revealed Religion was to give men clearer Notions of theſe Moral perfections, to preſs them by ſtronger Arguments, and encourage our Endeavours by ſuitable Rewards and puniſhments. So that if any Religion contradict theſe Moral Duties, we are ſure it is falſe; for the Revelation of God's will muſt be deſigned to make us better than we would otherwiſe be, following barely the Light of Nature, and not worſe. If then the Church of *Rome* over-throws Morality, and contradicts any of the Ten Commandments we are ſure it is not of God. And how far it has done this, they may judge by theſe Particulars.

Firſt, Whatever Church offers cheap and eaſie pardons for ſin, does take off ſo much from our ſenſe of the evil of ſin. We cannot have a very ill opinion of any thing that is eaſily forgiven. Now what are the Popes Pardons, Indulgences, Jubilees, Priviledged Altars, the going of Pilgrimages, the ſaying of ſome Collects, the wearing of *Agnus Dei*'s, Peebles, or other ſuch like traſh, but ſo many Engines to root out of mens minds any deep horrour or great ſenſe of ſin. Is not this the very thing which the People of the *Jews* of old offered at, to bring Thouſands of Rams, Ten Thouſand Rivers of Oyl, their Firſt born, or the fruit of their Body, to offer for their ſins? All which were rejected in the name of God in theſe words, *I will ſhew thee O man what is good, and what our Lord requireth of thee: Verily to do Judgment, and to love mercy, and to walk ſolicitous with thy God.* This is a Moral matter and unchangable; therefore whoever go to beat down the ſenſe of ſin, by the offer of Pardon, on any other terms, but the ſincere change of a mans life, deſtroy Morallity, which is the Image of God in man. If from this general Conſideration we deſcend to Examine the Commandments in particular, we ſhall find

Micha 6. 8.

find matter enough for a severe Charge against their Church.

Is not the First Commandment broken when Devotions are offered to Saints which Import their being *Omniscient, Omnipresent and Almighty*; that are the Incommunicable Attributes of the God-head: and when pardon of sin, preservation, Grace against Temptations, and Eternal life, are immediately begged from Saints. It is true, they say the sence of these prayers, is only that we desire their assistance at Gods hands for these blessings. But the words of their Offices import no such matter. And though for above One Hundred and Sixty Years these things have been complained of; and in the Correction of their Offices, some of them were cast out; yet, many of them do still continue: In which the plain sence of the words of their Offices is Idolatrous: Only they make a shift with another and forced sence put on them, to defend themselves from that charge. And for such Devotions they can shew no Warrant for the first Thousand years after Christ.

The *Second* Commandment is so openly and confessedly broken by them, that many of them maintain, it does not all oblige Christians: but belonged only to the Jewish Dispensation. And in all their Catechisms it is left out, which was done very wisely; (with what honesty let them answer) for it was not fit the people should look on that as a Commandment, which they saw so notoriously broken throughout their whole Church: A great trade being also driven by the breach of it. That this was not in the Primitive Church, themselves confess: all the Books the Fathers wrote against the Idolatry of the Heathens, demonstrate this. Nor were Images so much as set up in Churches before the Sixth Century. And then care was taken that they

should

ſhould not be worſhipped : and not before the Eighth Century were they worſhipped in any place of the Chriſtian Church.

The Doctrine of the Popes power of Relaxing of Oaths, and diſcharging men from the Obligation of them, joyned with the practice of their Popes for above 800 years, is as formal an Oppoſition to the *Third* Commandment as can be Imagined. This was alſo begun in the *Eighth* Century.

The vaſt multiplication of Holy-days, made the Obſervation of the Lords day of neceſſity ſlacken.

They have deſtroyed the Order of Societies, eſtabliſhed in the *Fifth* Commandment; by the Power they allow the Pope to Depoſe Princes, and abſolve Subjects from their Alleageance.

They teach the murdering and burning all Hereticks, that is to ſay, all that will not ſubmit to their Tyranny: by which Infinite numbers of Innocent perſons have been murdered, againſt the *Sixth* Commandment. And theſe two Doctrines of depoſing Princes, and putting Hereticks to death, were abhorred by the Church for the firſt *Eight* ages, and were brought in by the Popes ſince that time.

The frequent practice of the Court of *Rome*, in granting Divorces, on the pretence either of Spiritual kindred, or of Degrees not forbidden, either by the Law of Nature, or the word of God, and allowing ſecond Marriages to both Parties, upon ſuch Divorces, is an avowed breach of the *Seventh* Commandment.

The ſetting on, ſome Princes to Invade other Princes in their juſt Rights, is the Doctrine, as well as it has been the practice of their Church for ſome Ages. And as their Popes have wreſted many Territories from Temporal Princes, ſo for many Ages they ſet on Publick

lick Robbery againſt the *Eighth* Commandment.

The Doctrine of Equivocating, both taught, and practiſed, the breaking of ſafe Conducts, and publick Faith decreed by their General Councils, is alſo againſt the *Ninth* Commandment.

For the *Tenth* I ſhall ſay nothing of it, becauſe the meaning of it is not ſo generally agreed on. But thus we ſee all the Rules of Morality are contradicted by that Church.

It might be juſtly added to ſwell up this Charge; that of late there have been Doctrines publiſhed to the world by the approved Caſuiſts of that Church, with Licence, which ſubvert all Juſtice, deſtroy all ſecurity, and take away the moſt ſacred ties of mankind. By the Doctrines of Probability, and of Ordering the Intention aright, there is no crime how black ſoever; but a man may adventure on it with a good conſcience. Theſe things were long and openly taught amongſt them, without any Cenſure. And when many of the *French* Clergy complained of theſe at the Court of *Rome* (perhaps more out of ſpite to the Jeſuits, than zeal for the Truth) it was long before theſe ſo juſt Remonſtrances, were heard. And in concluſion a trifling Cenſure was paſt on them: by which they were declared *Scandalous* (neither Impious, nor Wicked) and all were forbidden to teach them any more, but they ſtand yet, in the Books formerly publiſhed with Licence.

After all theſe particulars, is it to be wondered at, if the morals of the men of that Church be vitiated, when their Doctrine is ſo corrupted, for peoples practices are generally worſe than their Opinions. And thus the *Second* point is made good, that in our Church, we teach the ſame Rules of Living that are in the Scriptures, which are groſly corrupted by their Doctrines.

The

The *Third* Branch of the Christian Religion is the Worship of God and that chiefly the use of the Sacraments. For the Worship of God, let it be considered that we pray to God, and praise him only, for all these things about which the Scriptures command us to address to him. Our worship is in a Language that all the people understand, and so are edified by it according to St. *Paul*, who has enlarged so much on this matter, in a whole Chapter, that it is strange, how any who acknowledg the Authority of that Epistle, can deny it. Our Liturgies are such, that the Romanists cannot except to any part of them: Our ceremonies are few, and these be both decent and useful: So that in all the parts of our Worship, we do so exactly agree to the Rule of the Scriptures, and the Primitive Church, that they cannot blame us for any one Rubrick or Collect in it. But for their worship, It is in a Language not understood by the people: who to be sure can receive no Edification, from that they understand not; nor can they say *Amen* to such Devotions. This is as it were in spite to St. *Paul*, who took special care that as long as his Authority was in any esteem in the Church, such an abuse should never creep into it. Nor is there a shadow of Authority for such a practice, from the Primitive Church, in which for many Ages, the Worship was still in the vulgar Tongues.

1 Cor. 14.

Next their Worship is so overcharged with many Rites and Ceremonies, that the seriousness of Devotion must needs be much allayed by them. A great part of the Worship is so whispered, as if they were muttering Spells. Their Books of Exorcisms are the most indecent things that can be: full of Charms and other ridiculous Rites. And for the *Pontifical* and *Ceremonial* of their Church, they may match with Heathenism for Superstition.

tion. Their Offices are ſo various, and numerous, and the Rubricks ſeem ſo full of diſorder, that a man may as ſoon learn a Trade, as know all the ſeveral parts of them. How this can be reconciled to the Simplicity of the Goſpel, or the Worſhipping God in ſpirit and truth, may be eaſily judged by thoſe who can compare things.

For the Sacraments, we have the Two that Chriſt Inſtituted, Baptiſm, and the Lords Supper; And for Pennance, Confirmation, Ordination and Marriage, we have them alſo among us, as they were appointed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles: though we do not call theſe Sacraments. For Extream Unction we find no warrant at all for it, as a ſacred Ordinance: and we are ſure the Church for many Ages did not think of it. For Baptiſm it is done among us, in the very Form our Saviour appointed: and this they do not deny. But among them they cannot be aſſured that they are at all Baptized: ſince according to the Doctrine of the neceſſity of the Intention of the Prieſt, to the Being of a Sacrament, they cannot be aſſured of it: for an Atheiſtical Prieſt can ſpoil their Baptiſm, ſo that unleſs they can be certain of that, which is impoſſible for them to know, I mean the Intention of the Prieſt, they are not ſure that they were ever truly Baptized. Matt. 28. 19.

But for the Lords Supper, if any perſon will ſo far truſt his own Reaſon and ſenſes, as to compare all the Warrants we have in Scripture for that Ordinance, with the Practice of our Church and theirs, they will ſoon ſee who agree moſt to them. *Chriſt took Bread which he bleſſed and gave, ſaying, This is my Body which is given for you. He alſo took the Chalice and ſaid, Drink ye all of it,* &c. All this we doe, and no more, ſo that it is indeed a *Communion* among us: and thoſe who have read the account that *Juſtin Martyr* gives us of the Rites in the Communion in his days, would think he were Matt. 26. 26, 27. 28. ver.

reading the very Abſtract of our Office. But in the Church of *Rome*, beſides the leſs material things, of the Form of the Bread, the Conſecration of Altars and Veſſels, with the numberleſs little devices in the Canon of the Maſs, that they ſeem not of ſuch importance let theſe conſiderable changes they have made be looked into.

1. They have brought in the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, againſt the cleareſt Evidence both of ſenſe and reaſon, againſt the nature of a Sacrament, and its being a Memorial of Chriſts Death, and that by the very words of Conſecration, the Bread and Wine are Chriſts *Body and Blood*, as the one was *given for us*, and the other *ſhed for us*, on the Croſs: and not as he is now at the Right hand of God. The belief of this crept in by degrees, from the eighth Century, in which it was firſt ſet on foot, but much contradicted both in the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Church: and was not fully ſetled till the 13th Century. We are ſure it was not the Doctrine of the Churches of *Rome*, *Conſtantinople*, *Aſia*, *Antioch*, nor *Africk* in the 5th and 6th Centuries, by expreſs Teſtimonies from the moſt eſteemed Authors of that time, *Gelaſius*, *Chryſoſtom*, *Ephrem*, *Theodoret*, and St. *Auſtin*.

2. They deny the Chalice to the Laity againſt the expreſs words of the Inſtitution; and contrary both to the Doctrine and Tradition of the Church for 1300 years.

3. They have declared the Prieſts ſaying Maſs, to be an Expiatory Sacrifice for the Dead, and the Living, though the Scripture plainly ſays, *That Chriſt was once offered for us*. It is true the Primitive Church uſed the words *Sacrifice* and *Oblation* as our Church yet does, but their meaning by that, was only in the general ſenſe of theſe terms, as Prayers, Praiſes, and Alms are called Sacrifices.

Heb. 9. 26, 28.

4. They

4. They have brought in a new piece of Worſhip, which is the hearing of Maſs, without receiving the Sacrament: and it is now the great Devotion of their Church. Though by the Inſtitution, it is as expreſs as can be, that the Conſecration is only in order to its being a Communion. And by the Apoſtolical Canons, which ſome in their Church believe to be the work of the Apoſtles, and are by them all acknowledged to be a Collection of the Rites of the firſt Ages, all perſons that were preſent at the Worſhip, and did not communicate were to be ſeverely cenſured.

5. The adoring the Sacrament, the expoſing it on the Altar, and carrying it about in ſolemn Proceſſions, to be worſhipped, as they are late Inventions; ſo if Tranſubſtantiation be not true, they are by their own confeſſion the groſſeſt Idolatries that ever were,

And are not theſe conſiderable variations from the firſt Inſtitution of this Sacrament?

As for their own Sacraments, though there is no reaſon to equal them, to either of theſe that were inſtituted by Chriſt; yet ſome of them we uſe, as they were at firſt appointed. Perſons Baptized, are Confirmed with Impoſition of hands, the only Ceremony uſed by the Apoſtles. Acts 8. 17.

We allow the uſe of Confeſſion, and do preſs it in many caſes; and give the benefit of Abſolution: but we do not make this an Engin to ſcrew peoples ſecrets from them. For which there is no warrant in Scripture; nor was it thought neceſſary for many Ages after the Apoſtles. Confeſſion of publick Scandals was enjoyned, and for private ſins it was recommended: but this latter was not judged ſimply neceſſary for obtaining the pardon of ſin. And what noiſe ſoever they make of the good that Confeſſion, and the enjoyning of Pennance, may do,

if well managed, we need only appeal to ſome of their own beſt Writers, now in *France*, whether as they have been practiſed, they have not rather driven all true Piety out of the world. If theſe abuſes had been only the faults of ſome Prieſts, the blame could not have been juſtly caſt on their Church; but when the publick Rules given to Confeſſors, printed with Licence, are their warrants for ſo doing, then their Church is in fault. So that nothing is more common among them, than for perſons after a confeſſion made of their ſins, with a ſlight ſorrow, and ſome trifling pennance undergone, together with the Prieſtly Abſolution, to fancy themſelves as clean from all ſin, as if they had never offended God. And this being the Doctrin of their Church, it both leſſens the ſenſe of ſin, and takes men off from making ſuch earneſt applications to God through Chriſt, as the Goſpel commands.

Morinus. For Orders they are among us with the ſame Rites that Chriſt and the Apoſtles gave them firſt: And a learned Man of their own Church has lately publiſhed the moſt ancient Forms of Ordinations he could find: From which it appears, that all the Ceremonies in their Ordinations, for the want of which they accuſe us, were brought in ſince the eighth Century: ſo that even by their own Principles theſe things cannot be neceſſary to Ordination, otherwiſe there were no true Orders in the Church for the firſt eight Ages.

Heb. 13. 4. For Marriage we honour it as Gods Ordinance; and ſince the Scriptures declare it *honourable in all*, without exception, we dare deny it to none who deſire it. St. *Paul* delivers the Duty of Clergy-men towards their
1 Tim. 3. 2. 4. 11. Wives, with Rules for their Wives behaviour, which had been very impertinent if Clergy-men might have no Wives. We find a married Clergy in the firſt ten Centuries:

turies: And we know by what baſe Arts the Cælibate of the Clergy was brought in; and what horrid ill effects it has produced. Neither do we allow of any devices to hinder Marriage, by degrees of kindred not prohibited in the Law of God, or the trade that was long driven in granting Diſpenſations in thoſe degrees, and afterwards annulling theſe, and avoiding the Marriages that followed upon them, upon ſome pretences of Law.

Thus it appears, how they have corrupted the Doctrine of the Sacraments, together with the Worſhip of God.

The laſt head of Religion is *Government*; and as to this, we can challenge any to ſee what they can except to us. Firſt in reference to the Civil Power, we declare all are bound for conſcience ſake to obey every lawful Command of the Supream Authority, and to ſubmit when they cannot obey. We pretend to no Exemption of Clarks from the Civil Juriſdiction, but *give to Cæſar the things that are Cæſars*. We do not obey the King only becauſe he is of our Religion: much leſs do we allow of Conſpiracies or Rebellions upon our judging him an Heretick, ſo that we deliver no Doctrin that can be of any ill conſequence to the Society we live in.

And for the Eccleſiaſtical Government we have Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons, rightly Ordained, and in their due ſubordination to one another; every one adminiſtring theſe Offices due to his Function, which has been the Government of the Chriſtian Church, ſince the times of the Apoſtles. So that we have a clear vocation of Paſtors among us, from whoſe hands every perſon may without ſcruple receive all the Sacraments of the Church.

But for the Church of *Rome*, how unſafe is the Civil Government among them? not to mention the Doctrin

of

of depoſing Princes, for which I refer you to my former Letter; What a ſecurity does the Exemption of Clerks from the Civil Courts in caſes criminal, give to looſe and debauched Church-men; and what diſturbance muſt this breed to a Common wealth? The denying the Civil Magiſtrate power to make Laws that concern Religion, or oblige Churchmen, takes away a great deal of his Rights; for ſcarce any Law can be made but wrangling and ill-natur'd Churchmen, may draw it within ſome head of Religion. And that this was frequently done in former Ages, all that have read Hiſtory know. The quarrels that were in the beginning of this Century between the Pope and the Republick of *Venice* were a freſh Evidence of it.

But for the Eccleſiaſtical Government, they have ſpoil-ed it in all the parts of it. The Pope has aſſumed a power of ſo vaſt an extent, and ſo arbitrary a nature, that all the ancient Canons are thrown out of doors by it. We know that originally the Biſhops of *Rome* were looked on by the reſt of the Church, as their Colleagues and fellow Biſhops. The Dignity of the City made the See more remarkable; and the belief of St. *Peters* having founded it, with his ſuffering Martrydom there, with St. *Paul*, made it much honoured: ſo that when the Empire became Chriſtian, then the Dignity of the Imperial City made the Biſhop of *Rome* be acknowledged the firſt Patriarch. From this beginning they aroſe by many degrees to the height of pretending to a Supremacy both Civil and Spiritual; and then they not only received appeals, which was all they at firſt pretended to, but ſet up Legantine Courts every where, made the Biſhops ſwear Obedience and Homage to them, and the Arch-Biſhops receive the Pall from their hands, in ſign of their dependance on them: Exempted Monaſteries,

and

and other Clarks from Epiſcopal Juriſdiction, broke all the Laws of the Church by their Diſpenſations: So that no ſhaddow of the primitive Government does now remain. And though *Gregory* the Great wrote with as much indignation againſt the Title of *Univerſal Biſhop*, as ever any Proteſtant did; yet his Succeſſors, have ſince aſſumed both the Name and thing. And to that height of Inſolence, has this riſen, that in the Council of *Trent*, all the Papal Party oppoſed the Decree that was put in, for declaring Biſhops to have their Juriſdictions by Divine Right. The Court Party not being aſhamed to affirm, that all Juriſdiction was by Divine Right only in the Pope; and in the other Biſhops, as the Delegates of the Apoſtolick See; and they were in this too hard for the other Party. So that now a Biſhop, who by the Divine appointment ought to *feed the Flock*, can do no more in that, then as the Pope gives him leave. The greateſt part of the Prieſts have no dependence on their Biſhops. The *Monks*, *Fryars*, and *Jeſuits*, being immediately ſubordinate to the Pope; ſo that they do what they pleaſe, knowing they can juſtifie any thing at *Rome*, and they fear no Cenſure any where elſe.

From this ſo many abuſes have crept in, and the Canoniſts have found out, ſo many devices to make them Legal, that there is no hope of Reforming theſe at *Rome*. The whole State of Cardinals is one great Corruption, who, from being Originally the Pariſh Prieſts of *Rome*, and ſo under all Biſhops, have raiſed themſelves ſo high that they do now trample on the whole Order; and pretend to an Equality with Princes. The giving Benefices to Children, the unlimitted Plurality of Benefices in one Perſon; the Comendam's, the reſerved Penſions, with many other ſuch like, are groſs, as well as late Corruptions. And no wonder if all men deſpair of Reform-

ing

ing the Court of *Rome*, when these abuses are become necessary to it, by which the greatness of the Cardinals and the other Officers, or Ministers there, is kept up.

I need not mention the gross *Simony* of that Court, where all the world knows, every thing may be had for money. The Popes themselves, are often Chosen by these Arts: and if their own Rules be true, such Elections, with every thing that follows on them are void. The Infinite Swarmes of the Inferiour Clergy, do plainly drive a *Simoniacal* Trade, by the Masses they say for Departed Souls, for Money. And for Publick Pennance, they have Universally let it fall, in stead whereof private Pennance is now in use. And if their own Writers say true, this is made an Engine to serve other ends, when by enjoyning slight and easie Pennances, they draw the People after them; upon which the Jesuites have been loudly accused, these Forty Years last past. In Sum, all the Corruptions or rather defects, that are in the Government of our Church, are only such as they brought in and have not met yet with such effectual remedies, as must cure the Church of these inveterate Distempers, their ill Conduct did cast her into.

If any of that Party will review these Particulars, and so far trust their own Reasons, as to judge according to the plainest Evidence, they cannot resist the conviction that they must needs meet with: when they see the simplicity of our Faith, the Morality of our Doctrine, the Purity of our Worship, and our Primitive Government; and compare it with their vast Superfetation of Articles of Faith, the Immorality of their Rules of living, the Superstition, if not Idolatry of their Worship, and the most extravagant Innovations in Government, that are in the Church of *Rome*.

And indeed these things are so clear that few could resist

reſiſt the force of ſo much plain truth, if it were not for ſome prejudices, with which they are ſo fettered, that they cannot examine matters with that freedom of mind, that is neceſſary. Therefore much care muſt be taken, to clear theſe, in the moſt familiar and demonſtrative manner that is poſſible.

They may be reduced to theſe Five chief Ones. *Firſt*, That the true Church cannot Err. *Secondly*, That out of the true Church there is no ſalvation. *Thirdly*, That the caſe of the Church of *Rome* is much ſafer than ours is; ſince the Church of *England* acknowledges a poſſibility of ſalvation in the Church of *Rome*; which they on the other hand deny to the Church of *England*. *Fourthly*, That unleſs there be a Supreme Judg ſet up, we can be ſure of nothing in Religion, but muſt fall into many Factions and Parties. And *Fiftly*, That the Reformation was but a Novelty begun in the former Age, and carried on in this Nation, out of an ill deſign; and managed with much Sacriledge.

The Firſt of theſe ſeemed neceſſary to be cleared in the beginning of this Diſcourſe, and I am deceived if it was not done convincingly. And for the Second we agree to it, That out of the true Church there is no Salvation.

But then the Queſtion comes, What makes one a Member of the true Church? The Scriptures call the Church the *Body of Chriſt*, of which he is *the Head*. Eph. 1. 22, 23. So then whoever are joined to Chriſt according to the Goſpel, muſt be within the true Church. But the deceit that lies hid under this, is, That from hence they fancy that the Unity of the Church, does conſiſt in an outward Communion with the See of *Rome*. And upon that they calculate, that there muſt be an Unity in the Body of the Church: And that cannot be, except all be joined to the See of *Rome*. Now, we grant there is

but one Church, but this Unity consists not in an Outward Communion, though that is much to be desired, but consists in an Unity of Belief, about the essentials of Christianity.

There is nothing more evident, than, that even according to their own Principles, other Churches are not bound upon the hazard of Damnation to hold Communion with the See of *Rome*; for it is not an Article of Faith, nor certain according to their own Doctrine, That the Pope is Infallible: And except that were certain, we cannot be obliged to hold Communion under such a Sanction with that See. For if it be possible that a Pope may become an Heretick or Schismatick (which many of them confess, and all agree that the contrary is not of Faith,) then other Churches are not in that case obliged to hold Communion with that See. If therefore the possibility of Error in that See be acknowledged, then holding Communion with it, cannot be the measure of the Unity of the Church. So we bring it to this Issue, It is not Heresie to say, The Pope may Err: Therefore this is no just prejudice against our Church, because we have departed from Communion with him, when he imposed his Errors on us. So all the high things they boast of that See, come to nothing, except they say, This Proposition is of Faith, *That the Pope is Infallible*. And for these Meetings that they call General Councils; they were at best but the Councils of the *Western* Patriarchate artificially packt, and managed with much Art; as appears even from Cardinal *Pallavicini*'s History of the Council of *Trent*.

For the Third Prejudice, It is the most disingenuous thing that can be; Because our Church is charitable, and modest in her Censures, and theirs is uncharitable, and cruel in her Judgments; therefore to conclude, That Communion

munion with them is ſafer, than with us. If confidence, and Preſumption, Noiſe, and Arrogance, are the marks to judge a Church by, we muſt yield to them in theſe: but if Truth, and Peace, Charity and holy Doctrines, be the better Standards, then we are as ſure, that our Communion is much ſafer. Let this Rule be applied to the other concerns of human life, and it will appear how ridiculous an abuſe it is to take meaſures from ſo falſe a Standard. If a man were ſick, the Queſtion comes, Whether he ſhall uſe an approved Phyſitian, or a Montebanks. On the one hand, the Montebank ſays, He will certainly cure him, and the Doctors will undoubtedly kill him. On the other hand, the Doctor modeſtly ſays, he will undertake nothing, but will do the beſt he can; and for the Montebank he tells him, It is very dangerous to truſt to him, though he will not deny but ſometimes great cures are done by them. The Inſolence of the Montebank will never carry it againſt a Doctors modeſty, but among weak and credulous People; and ſuch muſt they alſo be, who are taken with this Montebankry in Religion.

But if this be taken to pieces, the folly of it will yet appear more manifeſt. For *Firſt*, the reaſon we give for a poſſibility of Salvation in the Church of *Rome*, is, becauſe we look on ſuch and ſuch things as the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity, which are yet retained in that Church: And either this Reaſoning is true or falſe. If it be true, then it is as true, that we may be ſaved, who retain theſe Eſſentials of Chriſtianity: If it is falſe, then no Inference can be drawn from it. *Secondly*, Though we yield a poſſibility of Salvation in that Church, we declare that they are in great danger, by many opinions among them, which if fully underſtood and believed, do even vitiate the Eſſentials of Chriſtanity; parti-

cularly that Foundation of Religion, The Covenant between God and Man thorough Chriſt, formerly inſiſted on. So that we declaring a Certainty of Salvation to thoſe who ſincerely follow the rules of our Church, and a great danger in their Church, the preferring their Communion to ours, upon this account, is, as unreaſonable, as to ſleep without ſhutting our Doors, becauſe it is poſſible we ſhall not be robbed, in ſo doing: Or when we are at Sea to prefer a Cock-boat to a good clean Ship. Theſe are ſuch abſurdities, that an ordinary meaſure of weakneſs cannot ſwallow them down. *Thirdly*, We are not ſo forward as they imagine in yielding a poſſibility of Salvation in their Church. For our conceſſion amounts rather to this, that we do not deny it, than that we poſitively affirm it: And therefore they have no reaſon to draw theſe advantages from it.

4. A great difference is to be made between what God in the Infiniteneſs of his mercy may do, and what he is bound to by the Covenant made with man in the Goſpel; for the former we acknowledg, it is impoſſible to fix the limits of that mercy which is as far above our thoughts, as the Heavens are above the Earth. And how far it extends to all ſincere minds, we are not ſo preſumptuous as to define; therefore we will not Damn at pleaſure, as they do, but we do aſſert, Their Church is guilty of ſuch groſs Corruptions, by which the vitals of Religion are vitiated, that they have not that reaſon to claim the Mercies of the Goſpel due by that Covenant.

5. The Church of *Rome* has a dark and fair ſide; the dark ſide is, what the true conſequence of their Opinions is, the fair ſide is, what ſome witty men have deviſed to palliate theſe corruptions with, and to deceive the Vulgar by. We know many of that Communion, either

ther do not at all know theſe corrupt Doctrines, or have ſuch a fair repreſentation made of them, that they are thereby both more eaſily and more innocently miſled. From hence it is that we are inclined to hope more charitably concerning ſome, that are abuſed by them. But for thoſe that have examined things more fully, or that having been bred among us, yet reject the Truth, and go over to them, we are not ſo much enclined to have ſo good hopes of them, as they imagine: So this is a weak and ill grounded conceit in all the parts of it.

The Fourth Prejudice, is concerning the neceſſity of Submitting to ſome Common Judg, of diſtruſting our own reaſons, and believing the Church, without which there muſt be many Sects and Diviſions: and this they aggravate from the many different Parties that are among us.

But theſe are only ſpecious pretences to deceive weak people by. For Firſt, If it is neceſſary that there be a Common Judg, it is moſt neceſſary that it be known, who this Judg is, otherwiſe it is to no purpoſe to talk of a Judge, if they cannot point him out. This is like him that came to diſcover a huge Treaſure that he knew was hid under ground; but being asked in what place it was? he anſwered he did not know that: and he believed no body elſe knew. Some ſay the *Pope* is the Judge, others as confidently, that the Council is Judge even without the Pope, others think it is ſure work to ſay, the Pope and Council together: and others ſay the Body of the Church ſpread over the World.

For the Popes, ſome of them have been condemned for Hereſie, and others for making Schiſm; many of them have been moſt horrid men: they are generally ignorant in Divinity, being for moſt part bred to the

Law

Law: ſo that a great part of their own Church rejects the Popes Infallibility.

For Councils, they have had none theſe 115 years, and the laſt was ſo over-ruled by the Popes, that no other has been deſired ſince: ſo that if either a Council without the Pope, or with him, be the Infallible Judge they have loſt their infallibility; and except a Council were conſtantly ſitting, they can ſhew no living and ſpeaking Judg. So that either this is not neceſſary to a Church, or otherwiſe they are not a compleat Church. And for the Body of the Church, how ſhall a man find out their ſenſe, unleſs gathered together in ſome Aſſembly? or muſt a Man go over Chriſtendome, and gather the Suffrages of all the Paſtors of the Church? Upon the whole matter it is plain that after all their Canting about the Church, they muſt ſay, that it is of Faith that the Pope is Infallible, otherwiſe they have no Infallible Judg, and ſince a Council cannot be called but by the Pope, what ever Authority the Council has it can never be exerciſed, but by the Popes leave.

And for all the ſad conſequences they ſay, follow the want of a Common infallible Judg, it appears they are under them as well as we; but with this difference, that we plainly acknowledg, we have none, but do the beſt we can without one: But they, as they have none, no more than we, yet are under the Tyranny of one, and though they are not bound to believe him Infallible, yet are as much enſlaved to him, and obliged to obey him, as if he were really exempted from all poſſibility of Erring. So that in ſhort, they are ſlaves and we are freemen. And for theſe ill conſequences, they are, we confeſs, unavoïdable; for which we have very good Authority, from his words, who on all ſides is acknowledged to be Infallible

fallible, that ſaid, *Wo be to the World for ſcandals, for it is neceſſary that ſcandals do come.* Matt. 18. 7.

But to diſcuſs this Objection, which works much on ignorant people, let it be conſidered that ſin and Error are the two things, that do chiefly croſs the deſign of the Goſpel: and of theſe two, ſin, is the more dangerous and deſtructive: ſince there is great reaſon to hope that Error cannot be ſo fatal, when it infects a mind that is otherwiſe ſincere, as Sin, which clearly defaces the Image of God in the Soul. We ought not therefore to expect that the Goſpel, ſhould give any further ſecurity againſt Error, than it gives againſt Sin: On the contrary we ſhould rather expect a further ſecurity from Sin, becauſe it is moſt hurtful. But all the Proviſion made againſt Sin, is this, that in the Scriptures we are warned of the evil of it, and are directed to ſuch methods, and have the promiſes of ſuch Aſſiſtance, that if we uſe our endeavour, we ſhall not be overcome by ſin, nor periſh in it: So as to Error, we have the ſame ſecurity. The Goſpel affords us a very clear light for directing our Belief in the moſt important things, which if we ſtudy with due humility, and ſincerity, imploring God for the grace of his holy Spirit, for our inſtruction, we ſhall be preſerved from Error. And thus the ſame proviſion is made againſt Error, that is againſt Sin. And we have no reaſon to expect more. And as it were not fit, that Salvation ſhould be offered without obliging men to uſe their utmoſt endeavours, ſo it were not fit to give ſuch an eaſie Remedy againſt Error, as that a man ſhould not need to employ his reaſon to diſcover Truth, and avoid Miſtakes. *If our Goſpel be alſo hid, it is hid in them that periſh.* 2 Cor. 3. 3. Therefore that our Searches after Truth, may be both encouraged and rewarded, God ſets it before us

in

Law: ſo that a great part of their own Church rejects the Popes Infallibility.

For Councils, they have had none theſe 115 years, and the laſt was ſo over-ruled by the Popes, that no other has been deſired ſince: ſo that if either a Council without the Pope, or with him, be the Infallible Judge they have loſt their infallibility; and except a Council were conſtantly ſitting, they can ſhew no living and ſpeaking Judg. So that either this is not neceſſary to a Church, or otherwiſe they are not a compleat Church. And for the Body of the Church, how ſhall a man find out their ſenſe, unleſs gathered together in ſome Aſſembly? or muſt a Man go over Chriſtendome, and gather the Suffrages of all the Paſtors of the Church? Upon the whole matter it is plain that after all their Canting about the Church, they muſt ſay, that it is of Faith that the Pope is Infallible, otherwiſe they have no Infallible Judg, and ſince a Council cannot be called but by the Pope, what ever Authority the Council has it can never be exerciſed, but by the Popes leave.

And for all the ſad conſequences they ſay, follow the want of a Common infallible Judg, it appears they are under them as well as we; but with this difference, that we plainly acknowledg, we have none, but do the beſt we can without one: But they, as they have none, no more than we, yet are under the Tyranny of one, and though they are not bound to believe him Infallible, yet are as much enſlaved to him, and obliged to obey him, as if he were really exempted from all poſſibility of Erring. So that in ſhort, they are ſlaves and we are freemen. And for theſe ill conſequences, they are, we confeſs, unavoïdable; for which we have very good Authority, from his words, who on all ſides is acknowledged to be Infallible

fallible, that ſaid, *Wo be to the World for ſcandals, for it is neceſſary that ſcandals do come.* Matt. 18.7.

But to diſcuſs this Objection, which works much on ignorant people, let it be conſidered that ſin and Error are the two things, that do chiefly croſs the deſign of the Goſpel: and of theſe two, ſin, is the more dangerous and deſtructive: ſince there is great reaſon to hope that Error cannot be ſo fatal, when it infects a mind that is otherwiſe ſincere, as Sin, which clearly defaces the Image of God in the Soul. We ought not therefore to expect that the Goſpel, ſhould give any further ſecurity againſt Error, than it gives againſt Sin: On the contrary we ſhould rather expect a further ſecurity from Sin, becauſe it is moſt hurtful. But all the Proviſion made againſt Sin, is this, that in the Scriptures we are warned of the evil of it, and are directed to ſuch methods, and have the promiſes of ſuch Aſſiſtance, that if we uſe our endeavour, we ſhall not be overcome by ſin, nor periſh in it: So as to Error, we have the ſame ſecurity. The Goſpel affords us a very clear light for directing our Belief in the moſt important things, which if we ſtudy with due humility, and ſincerity, imploring God for the grace of his holy Spirit, for our inſtruction, we ſhall be preſerved from Error. And thus the ſame proviſion is made againſt Error, that is againſt Sin. And we have no reaſon to expect more. And as it were not fit, that Salvation ſhould be offered without obliging men to uſe their utmoſt endeavours, ſo it were not fit to give ſuch an eaſie Remedy againſt Error, as that a man ſhould not need to employ his reaſon to diſcover Truth, and avoid Miſtakes. *If our Goſpel be alſo hid, it is hid in them that periſh.* 2 Cor. 3.3. Therefore that our Searches after Truth, may be both encouraged and rewarded, God ſets it before us in

in such a Light, that it is our own fault if we do not see and follow it. But if men will either blindly give themselves up, to the conduct of such Guides, whose interest it is to mislead them, which is the case of the Church of *Rome*; or out of humour, or other base ends, will invent or follow some erroneous Tenets, as other Hereticks do, they have themselves to blame; and shall bear their own Iniquity: but they have no reason to cast the fault upon God, or accuse the Scriptures, of Darkness, or Defectiveness, in these things that are necessary to Salvation.

I come now to the last Prejudice, which will require a fuller Discussion, because it relates to matter of Fact: which as it is better understood, so it makes deeper Impressions on people, that are not so much wrought on by speculative points, as by these things that fall under their senses.

They first except to the Novelty of our Reformation, and always insult with this Question, *Where was your Religion before Luther?* To this, these things are to be opposed. *First*, we turn back the Question, and ask them where was their Religion the first six hundred years after Christ? Where was the Worship of Images, the Doctrine of the Corporal Presence, of Redeeming out of Purgatory, of Deposing Princes, and of the Worshipping Saints, before the Eighth Century? If the Reformation be now to be condemned, because of its Novelty, these things were then to be as much condemned, because they were then Novelties.

Secondly. If the Reformation had brought in any new Doctrine, its Novelty were indeed a just Prejudice against it: but it was only the throwing out of these Corruptions which had been brought in, in some dark and Ignorant Ages.

Thirdly,

Thirdly. The Doctrine of the Reformed Church, is no other than what Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught; and what the Church believed for many Ages after them. And as to the Poſitive part of it, it has been ſtill held by the Church of *Rome*, and is yet acknowledged by them: but with ſo many Additions, that there was a Neceſſity of Reforming theſe: And this is often to be inculcated in them, that there is no Article of Faith, nor any other material point of Religion, among us that is condemned by the Church of *Rome*. They only blame us becauſe we do not in many other points believe as they do: and this we ought not to do, unleſs we could ſee an equal Authority binding us to all alike.

Another Exception is, that in the Reformation we made a Schiſm, and broke the Unity of the Church, whereas if there had been any things amiſs in the Church, they ſay the Reformers ſhould have endeavoured to remove them, without tearing the Body of Chriſt in pieces.

But in anſwer to this, we acknowledg if the things complained of, could have been continued without ſin, they ought not to have departed from the Communion of other Churches: but when the publick Liturgies and the Worſhip was found to be full of ſuch Corruptions, that without Idolatry and Superſtition, they could be no longer kept up, then it was not time to ſtay for the leiſure of their Neighbouring Churches.

Yet if there had been any probable hopes, that the See of *Rome*, would have concurred in ſuch a Reformation, it had been worth ſtaying for, as long, as was poſſible. But when it was on the contrary, apparent, that all the moſt juſt Remonſtrances made to that Court, were anſwered at beſt with delays and Excuſes, if not with Excommunications and other cenſures; they had

no reaſon to expect any concurrence from thence. So the caſe being thus put, that they diſcovered ſuch Corruptions in the Worſhip of God, with which they could not comply any longer; either they were obliged to Worſhip God againſt their Conſciences, or to lay aſide all publick Worſhip, or elſe to caſt out theſe Corruptions by a Reformation. Let any man of good reaſon judge, whether the laſt of theſe was not to be choſen?

There was no Obligation lying on this Church to wait for the pleaſure of the Court of *Rome*, or our neighbouring Churches in this matter. We are a free and Independent Church: we owe a charitable and neighbourly Correſpondence to forreign Churches; but we are ſubject to none of them. And according to the expreſs Deciſion of one of the firſt General Councils, in the like caſe, we were no way ſubordinate to the See of *Rome*, even as it was the Patriarchate of the Weſt. Themſelves do confeſs that it is no Hereſie to ſay, That See is fallible: and therefore we were not obliged to dance attendance at that Court, when we diſcovered the Corruptions, with which it had deceived the World; but might in our National or Provincial Synods at home, examine and Reform whatever errors were among us. And the multitude of thoſe who held theſe errors, could be no juſt ground for delaying any advances towards a Reformation; no more than in the ancient Church, the Orthodox Biſhops when choſen into a See corrupted with Arrianiſm, were obliged because that Contagion was generally ſpread, to make no attempts toward Reformation.

They Except further, That the Reformation was begun here by a vitious Prince, King *Henry* the Eighth, who

who partly out of revenge, becauſe the Pope would not grant his deſire about the Divorce of his Queen, and partly to enrich himſelf and his Courtiers with the ſale of Abbey-lands did ſuffer theſe Doctrins firſt to take head here: and therefore they can have no good opinion of any thing that came from ſo wicked a man, and upon ſuch ill motives.

If this be a good Argument againſt the Reformation, it was as good againſt Chriſtianity upon *Conſtantine*'s turning Chriſtian; for the Heathen Writers repreſent him with as black a character as they can do King *Henry*. But we muſt not think ill of every thing that is done by a bad man, and upon an ill Principle: Otherwiſe if we had lived in *Jehu*'s days, the ſame Plea would have been as ſtrong, for keeping up the Idolatry of *Baal*: ſince *Jehu* had in a very unſincere manner deſtroyed it: and yet God rewarded him for what he had done.

But whatever might have been King *Henry*'s ſecret motives, his proceedings were regular and juſtifiable. He found himſelf married to her that had been his own Brothers Wife, contrary to the expreſs words of the Law of God. The Popes Legat, and his own Confeſſor and all the Biſhops of *England* (except one) thought his ſcruples were well grounded. Upon which according to the ſuperſtition of that time, he made his applications to the Court of *Rome* for a Divorce: which were at firſt well received, and a Bull was granted. Afterwards ſome defects being found in that, a more ample one was deſired, which was alſo granted: and Legats were appointed to try the matter. But the Pope ſoon after turned over to the Emperors Party, whoſe Aunt the Queen was: and was thereupon prevailed with, to recal the Legats Commiſſion, deſtroy the Bull, and cite the King

to appear at *Rome*, where all things and persons were at the Emperors devotion. Upon all this, the King did expostulate with the Pope, that either his business was just, or unjust: if it was just why did he recall what he had granted, and put him off with such delays. If it was not just, why did he at first grant the Bull for the Divorce. This was unanswerable, but the Pope did still feed him with false hopes, yet would do nothing. Upon which he consulted the chief Universities, and the most learned men in Christendom, about his Marriage. Twelve famous Universities, and above an hundred learned Doctors, did declare under their hands and Seals (some writing larger Treatises about it) that his Marriage was against the Law of God. And that in that case the Popes Dispensation, which had allowed the Marriage, was void of it self. So after the King had been kept in suspence from *December* 1527 till *February* 153$\frac{3}{4}$. above six years, he set his Divines to examin what authority the Pope had in *England*, either by the Law of God, or the practice of the Primitive Church, or the Law of the Land, and after a long and accurate search, they found He had no authority at all in *England*, neither by the Laws of God, of the Church, nor of the Land: so this Decision was not made rashly, nor of a sudden.

The Popes Authority being thus cast off, it was Natural in the next place to Consider, what Doctrines were then held in *England*, upon no other grounds than Papal Decrees. For it was absurd to reject the Popes power; and yet to retain these Opinions, which had no better Foundation than his Authority. Upon this many of the things, which had been for some Ages received in the Church of *Rome*, fell under debate: And, a great many

many particulars were reformed. Yet, that King was ſo leavened with the Old Superſtition, that the progreſs of the Reformation, was but ſlow during his Reign. But it was carried on to a further perfection, under King *Edward*, and Queen *Elizabeth*. In all their Methods of proceeding, there is nothing that can be reaſonably cenſured: if it be confeſſed that the Pope is not Infallible, and the whole Church of *Rome*, acknowledges that it is no Hereſie to deny his Infallibility.

And for the Sale of the Abby-lands, they only ſpoiled the ſpoilers. For the *Monks*, and *Fryers*, had put theſe publick cheats on the Nation, of Redeeming Souls out of Purgatory, going on Pilgrimages, with the worſhip of Saints, and Images, which were infuſed in the vulgar, by many lying Stories, pretended Apparitions, the falſe ſhew of Miracles, with other ſuch like Arts. And the credulous and ſuperſtitious Multitudes were thereby wrought on, to endow theſe Houſes with their beſt Lands, and adorn their Churches with their Plate and richeſt Furniture. It was not to be expected that when their Impoſtures were diſcovered, they ſhould enjoy the ſpoil they had made by them: nor was it for the publick intereſt of the Nation, to give ſuch encouragement to idleneſs, as the converting all theſe Houſes to Foundations for an unactive life would have been. Many of them were applied to good Uſes, Biſhopricks, Cathedral and Collegiat Churches, Hoſpitals, and free Schools: And more of them ought indeed to have been converted to theſe ends. But the exceſſes of King *Henry*, and his Courtiers muſt not be charged on the Reformers; who did all they could to hinder them.

And

And thus all these prejudices with which the Vulgar are misled, appear to be very unjust, and ill grounded. In conclusion, If by these or such like considerations, any that are now of that Communion, can be brought to mind Religion in earnest, considering it, as a Design to save their Souls, by making them truly pure and holy; and so reconciling them to God through Christ: And if they will examine Matters without Partiality, seeking the truth and resolving to follow it, wherever they find it; and joyn with their Enquiries, earnest Prayers to God, *the Father of lights*, to open their eyes, and grant them his Holy Spirit, to lead them into all truth; there is little doubt to be made, but the great Evidence that is in Truth, will in due time appear so clear to them as to dissipate all these mists, which Education, implicite Faith, and Superstition have raised, by which they have hitherto darkened.

FINIS.

12175